

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSCE-00 L-03 PM-05 SSO-00
INRE-00 IO-13 ACDA-12 PRS-01 /091 W
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O 021530Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5172

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 03228

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS, MOPS, CD, FR

SUBJ: REBEL ACTIVITY IN CHAD

REF: STATE 27625

BEGIN SUMMARY: FRENCH WERE TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY
GOUKOUNI REBEL ATTACK ON FAYA LARGEAU AT THIS TIME.
THEY DISAPPOINTED AT PERFORMANCE OF FAYA GARRISON
OF 1200 MEN. DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION ON THE
GROUND OR IN THE AIR EXCLUDED. GOF AIRLIFTING INFAN-
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TRY WEAPONS BEGINNING TODAY TO ARM RELIEF COLUMN OF
SOME 1000 MEN. FRENCH ADVISORS WILL ACCOMPANY THE
COLUMN AT LEAST AS FAR AS KORO TORO. THEY VIEW THE
SITUATION AS SERIOUS AND PESSIMISTIC ABOUT GOC BEING
ABLE TO HOLD ON TO THE NORTH, BUT RESULTS NEED NOT
BE GRAVE FOR GOC. OTHER TWO GARRISONS IN NORTH WILL
BE EVACUATED IF FAYA FALLS. END SUMMARY.

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR RESPONSIBLE FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA (DE LA ROCHERE) GAVE US A RUNDOWN ON CURRENT CHAD SITUATION MORNING OF FEBRUARY 2. GOF, HE SAID, HAD BEEN TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THE GOUKOUNI REBEL ATTACK ON FAYA LARGEAU AT THIS TIME AND WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE FATE OF THE GARRISON HERE.

2. FRENCH RESPONSE TO CHAD AID REQUEST. DE LA ROCHERE, CONFIRMING MALLOUM'S REQUEST FOR DIRECT FRENCH MILITARY ASSISTANCE, SAID THAT DIRECT FRENCH MILITARY INTERVENTION ON THE GROUND WAS EXCLUDED. FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS, INCLUDING THE FACT THAT IT WOULD BE INEFFECTUAL IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION AND THE TERRAIN, AERIAL INTERVENTION BY FRENCH JAGUARS OR OTHER FIGHTER AIRCRAFT WAS ALSO EXCLUDED. THE GOF WAS TODAY (FEBRUARY 2) BEGINNING AN AIRLIFT OF INFANTRY-TYPE WEAPONS TO NDJAMENA TO BE USED AT LEAST IN PART TO ARM A RELIEF COLUMN OF SOME ONE THOUSAND MEN. THE AIRLIFT WILL CONTINUE OVER THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS. THE COLUMN WILL LEAVE FOR THE NORTH WITH KORO TORO AS ITS FIRST OBJECTIVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. FRENCH MILITARY ADVISORS WILL ACCOMPANY THE RELIEF COLUMN. DE LA ROCHERE WAS NOT PRECISE AS TO THE EXACT NUMBERS OF ADVISORS OR THEIR EXACT ROLE. HE SAID THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE NUMEROUS AND THAT IN ADDITION TO PRO-
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VIDING TECHNICAL SERVICES TO THE RELIEF COLUMN THEY WOULD ALSO HOPEFULLY SERVE TO STIFFEN ITS FIGHTING RESOLVE.

3. FATE OF DOWNED AIR CREW. DE LA ROCHERE SAID THAT IT WAS ALMOST A CERTAINTY THAT CREW OF THE DC-3 DOWNED SUNDAY (THREE FRENCHMEN AND TWO CHADIANS) WERE ALL DEAD. ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION THE AIRCRAFT HAD GONE DOWN IN FLAMES AND EXPLODED UPON HITTING THE GROUND.

4. FORCE ATTACKING FAYA LARGEAU. FAYA WAS INVESTED BY REBELS OF THE GOUKOUNI FACTION. HE DID NOT HAVE INFORMATION AS TO THEIR PRECISE NUMBERS, BUT THEY PROBABLY MARGINALLY OUTNUMBERED THE DEFENDING GARRISON OF 1200 MEN. GOUKOUNI HAS IN TOTAL ABOUT THREE THOUSAND MEN UNDER ARMS. THEIR ARMAMENT HE DESCRIBED AS "ONE DEGREE ABOVE WHAT THEY HAD AT BARDAI IN JULY." HE REFERRED TO RECOILLESS RIFLES, HEAVY MACHINE GUNS, AND TOYOTA JEEP-TYPE VEHICLES. THE GOF WAS NOT CERTAIN THAT THE DC-3 WHICH WAS DOWNED AND THE DC-4 WHICH WAS HIT WERE STRUCK BY ROCKETS,

THOUGH THERE IS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THIS WAS THE
CASE. IF ROCKETS HAD BEEN USED, THIS WAS NOT
NECESSARILY AN INDICATION THAT THEY HAD BEEN SERVED
BY LIBYAN OR OTHER NON-REBEL PERSONNEL. THE LIBYANS
HAVE BEEN TRAINING GOUKOUNI'S REBELS FOR SOME TIME

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AND IT IS ENTIRELY PLAUSIBLE THAT SOME OF THESE HAVE
BEEN TRAINED IN THE USE OF GROUND-TO-AIR MISSILES.
IN ANY CASE, IT WOULD NOT HAVE REQUIRED GREAT SKILL
TO HIT THE TWO SLOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT WHICH FOLLOWED
THE SAME FLIGHT PATH INTO FAYA WHICH HAD BEEN USED
FOR MONTHS.

5. DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY. IN INFORMING MALLOUM OF
WHAT ASSISTANCE THEY INTEND TO PROVIDE, THE FRENCH
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WILL ALSO BE ASKING HIM WHAT HE INTENDS TO DO ON THE
DIPLOMATIC FRONT. DE LA ROCHERE REFERRED TO QADHAFI'S
OFFER OF NEGOTIATION AT NIAMEY AND IMPLIED THAT THE
GOF WOULD BE PRESSURING MALLOUM TO RESPOND POSITIVELY.
HE SAID THERE HAS BEEN NO DIRECT NEGOTIATION WITH
GOUKOUNI AND NONE WILL BE POSSIBLE UNLESS IT HAS GONE
THROUGH TRIPOLI.

6. US ACTIONS. DE LA ROCHERE ASKED HOW THE US WOULD
BE RESPONDING TO MALLOUM'S REQUEST FOR HELP. WE
REPLIED DRAWING ON PARAS 6 AND 8-12 OF REFTTEL. DE LA
ROCHERE SAID THAT THE GOF IS ALREADY PURSUING OAU
MEDIATION UNDER BONGO. HE WAS NOT SURE JUST WHERE IN
EUROPE BONGO IS AT PRESENT. DE LA ROCHERE SAID HE
DID NOT THINK THE SAUDIS WOULD BE LIKELY TO SHOW ANY
INTEREST IN HELPING THE GOC.

7. CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS. ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 29,
THE DC-3 ON A RESUPPLY MISSION TO FAYA WAS SHOT DOWN
SEVERAL KILOMETERS AWAY FROM THE OUTPOST. ON MONDAY,
JANUARY 30, A DC-4 FERRYING IN FUEL WAS HIT AS IT
DETOURED OVER THE SITE OF THE DC-3 CRASH AND BURNED
IMMEDIATELY AFTER MAKING A FORCED LANDING. AT FIVE
IN THE MORNING OF TUESDAY, JANUARY 31, THE REBELS
OPENED AN ATTACK ON FAYA BEGINNING WITH ARTILLERY.
LATER IN THE DAY THE AIR STRIP WAS LOST BUT LATER
RETAKEN. BY NOON ON TUESDAY SOME GARRISON OUTPOSTS
WERE CALLING FOR MORE AMMUNITION, INDICATING TO THE
FRENCH THAT THEY WERE PANICKING AND FIRING WILDLY.
THERE IS AN ADEQUATE AMOUNT OF AMMUNITION IN FAYA.

8. OTHER INFORMATION. THE FRENCH MILITARY IS VERY
DISAPPOINTED AT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE GARRISON.
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IT IS WELL-POSITIONED AND ADEQUATELY ARMED TO HOLD
OUT. THE FRENCH PARACHUTE TRAINING TEAM THAT WENT TO
FAYA IN NOVEMBER HAD GIVEN INTENSIVE TRAINING IN
HOW THE GARRISON COULD BE HELD. THE TEAM LEFT CON-
FIDENT. "WITHIN A WEEK" ALL WAS FORGOTTEN. THE
SOUTHERN SOLDIERS AT FAYA DON'T KNOW AND ARE AFRAID
OF THE TERRAIN AS WELL AS OF THE REBELS. THERE ARE

NO FRENCHMEN AT FAYA. THE LAST OF THE "COOPERANTS" LEFT BY AIR SHORTLY BEFORE THE ATTACK BEGAN. THE RELIEF COLUMN WILL HEAD TOWARDS KORO TORO. IF THE FAYA GARRISON IS STILL HOLDING OUT WHEN THEY ARRIVE (THREE OR FOUR DAYS FROM THE TIME THEY LEAVE NDJAMENA) THEY WILL PROCEED TOWARDS FAYA WITH THE INTENT OF RELIEVING THE SIEGE. IF IN THE MEANTIME THE GARRISON SHOULD DECIDE TO BREAK OUT, THE RELIEF COLUMN WILL LINK UP WITH IT AND RETURN TOWARDS KORO TORO. THE GARRISON IS ADEQUATELY ARMED AND HAS ENOUGH FUEL AND VEHICLES TO MAKE AN ORDERLY WITHDRAWAL FROM FAYA. THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE LOSSES, BUT THESE NEED NOT BE HEAVY IF THEY EVACUATE IN GOOD ORDER.

9. WE ARE ARRANGING FOR REGULAR UPDATES ON THE MILITARY SITUATION FROM THE QUAI'S MILITARY ADVISOR ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS.

10. DAO PARIS IS RECEIVING SAME READOUT OF EVENTS FROM FRENCH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (MOD) WITH ONE EXCEPTION. FRENCH MOD AS YET UNCERTAIN WHETHER DOWNED AIRCRAFT WERE HIT BY GROUND-TO-AIR ROCKETS OR BY 23MM BI-TUBE ANTIAIRCRAFT GUNS.
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